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TOPLESS SUNBATHERS ANGRY OVER CITATIONS - FEMINISTS SAY IT'S POLICE HARASSMENT

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A Seattle police crackdown on topless sunbathing by women at Denny Blaine Park on Lake Washington has drawn the ire of a feminist group.

Linda Averill of Radical Women, a socialist-feminist organization, called the police response harassment, and said the wrong people are being cited.

The police ought to run off the men who come to the park to ogle the women, Averill said today, instead of harassing the woman who are exercising their right to use a public facility.

The small park has a reputation of being a place where women can go without being bothered, Averill said.

Police said the crackdown, which has resulted in 16 women being cited for lewd conduct, resulted from complaints.

One of those complaints came from Seattle Park Department employees who had been sent to the park to work on a wall that had been vandalized, according to Seattle police spokesman Dan Fordice.

Andy Reynolds, spokesman for the Seattle Parks Department, confirmed that two male employees were threatened at the park by women and those employees filed a complaint with police.

“We receive complaints, and it's our job to enforce the law,” Fordice said.

A female officer in plain clothes was brought in to initiate the citation process against women sunbathing topless, then other officers were called in, Fordice explained. This process was used because a patrol car could be seen entering the park and the women were putting their tops back on, he added.

Other complaints have come from people trying to use the park who have been confronted by women who have been “fairly aggressive,” Fordice added.

Reynolds said no one has the exclusive right to a park. “They can't run the men off. They have to find a way to live compatibly or put their tops back on,” he said.

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